

What do the numbers mean?

Name: _____

School: _____

Date: _____

Teacher: _____

Sample Site: _____

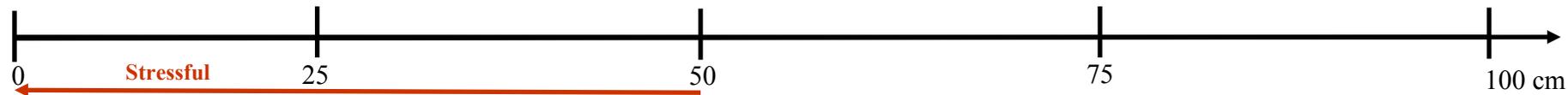
Plot your data on the parameter scales below. Is the water healthy?



Dissolved Oxygen (DO) is needed for aquatic animals to breath. Levels below 5 mg/L can be stressful. Levels below 1 mg/L can result in fish kills.



pH is a chemical measurement if something is an acid or base. Water is neutral at a pH of 7. A pH reading between 6 and 8 is ideal for most organisms.



Turbidity is the clarity of the water. Less than 50 cm prevents sunlight from reaching the underwater grasses (submerged aquatic vegetation, SAV).



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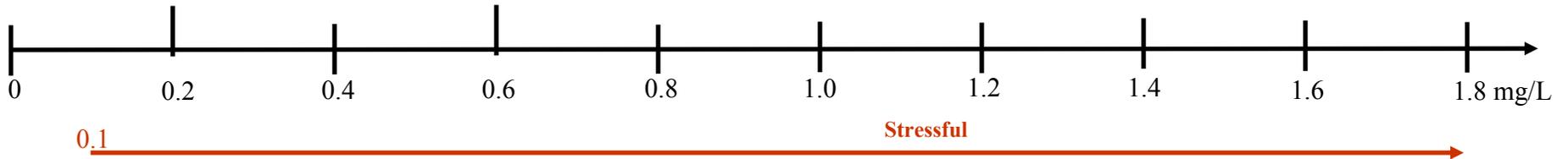


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Nutrients help plants grow. Too many nutrients in the water can cause algae to grow on the surface of the water, preventing sunlight from reaching the underwater plants. When the algae dies, bacteria begin to decompose it. The decomposition process uses a lot of the dissolved oxygen leaving little for other organisms.



Nitrates - Sources of nitrates include agricultural runoff, septic systems, and waste water treatment plants.



Phosphates - Fertilizers are the primary source of phosphates.